

Claims:

1. A method of measuring the friction of a surface of a belt in a pulley and belt assembly, comprising the steps of applying a movable member to a surface of the belt, applying a thrust to the movable member in a sense to tend to move the movable member relative to the belt over its said surface, and obtaining a measure of the thrust needed to initiate slippage between the movable member and the belt, whereby to provide a measure of the friction of the said belt surface.

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2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said movable member is a rotatable member.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the thrust that is applied to said rotatable member is in the form of a counter-torque.

4. A method as claimed in claim 2 or claim 3 and including the step of monitoring the rotational movement of the rotatable member.

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5. A method as claimed in claim 4 and including the step of controlling the application of said counter-torque to the rotatable member in response to detection of its rotational movement.

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6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim and including the step of measuring the friction of said surface of the belt at a number of different positions across its width.

7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein measurement of the friction of said surface of the belt is undertaken whilst the belt is in motion.

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8. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein said measurement is undertaken repeatedly over time.

9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein said movable member is applied to said surface of the belt with a substantially constant force.

10. Apparatus for measuring the friction of a surface of a belt in a pulley and belt assembly, comprising means for applying a movable member to a surface of the belt, means for applying a thrust to the movable member in a sense to tend to move the movable member relative to the belt over its said surface, and means for obtaining a measure of the thrust needed to initiate slippage between the movable member and the belt, whereby to provide a measure of the friction of the said belt surface.

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11. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said movable member is a rotatable member.

12. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein the thrust applied to said rotatable member is in the form of a counter-torque.

13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11 or 12 and further comprising means for sensing rotational movement of the rotatable member.

25 14. Apparatus as claimed in claim 13 and further comprising means for controlling application of said counter-torque to the rotatable member in response to detection of its rotational movement.

15. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 10 to 14 and further comprising means for moving the movable member applying means so as to

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enable measurement of the friction of said surface of the belt at different positions across its width.

5 16. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 10 to 15 and further comprising means for applying said movable member to said surface of the belt with a substantially constant force.